

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn. We're in chambers this week, clearing the docket. And with me, as always, is hooded sweatshirt memo getter—
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			—Judge John Hodgman. That's a joke about something that our audience can't see, that everyone on this week's program is wearing a hooded sweatshirt.
00:00:23	John Hodgman	Host	We are alllll wearing hooded sweatshirts today, on our weekly <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> Zoom call!
00:00:30	Jesse	Host	Yeah.
			<i>[John and Jesse laugh.]</i>
00:00:32	John	Host	It's how we stay in touch, how we stay connected. And it's not just you and me and producer Jennifer Marmor, Jesse. Look. I'm gonna introduce our special guest in a second. But I gotta set this up. It is now December. We are approaching the winter solstice! In the northern hemisphere. Which this year is December the 21st. The longest night of the year! The <u>longest night</u> — <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —of 2020. Like we needed more of it.
			Whatever holiday you observe around this time, it's a time across cultures to kindle a light against the darkness, and eat food. Take comfort in family and friends, maybe only by Zoom, as we're doing now. Don't travel, if you can help it. Definitely eat a lot of food. And hope at the end of this long night, the sun rises again.
			But given 2020 so far, all bets are off. The sun may never rise again. I don't know! We'll see what happens. December 22nd might be the beginning of perpetual night. Who knows? But if that happens, if the sun doesn't rise, there is someone you want six feet safely by your side, and that is our special guest:
			Jean Grae! Your favorite polymathic artist of words and music and pictures and ideas. Member of the Legion of <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> Guest Bailiffs. Long live the Legion. Famed throughout the world for her portrayal of Monica on <i>Dicktown</i> , on Hulu. Throughout the world minus the UK and Canada and Australia. Basically any other nation. <i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> Sadly. Uh, get a VPN, mates. Bit.ly/dicktown .
00:02:06	John	Host	The creator of the forthcoming podcast <i>Stacey Jambles: Ace Detective With No Short Term Memory</i> , and also a holiday entertaining super expert. The indescribable—because she cannot be contained by words—Jean Grae! Hi, Jean!
00:02:18	Jean Grae	Guest	Hiii!
00:02:19	John	Host	Oh, and—!
00:02:20	Jean	Guest	And hygiene (<i>hi, jean</i>) is so important, especially right now.
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			<u>So</u> important.

00:02:23 Jesse Host Yeah.

[As soon as Jesse's audio starts, the sound of a leaf blower begins in the background.]

00:02:27 John Host Wash your hands when you come in.
And also, hello to our—our special, uh, pandemic frequent guest: the leaf blower outside Jesse's house.

[Jesse and Jean laugh.]

00:02:37 Jesse Host If you're concerned that the sun doesn't rise the day after the solstice, uh—well, I have an ally.

00:02:44 John Host *[Laughing]* That's right!

00:02:44 Jesse Host No leaves will be left un-blown in my neighborhood!

[Jean and John laugh.]

00:02:48 John Host You're gonna be like Bruce Campbell in *The Evil Dead 2*; you're gonna strap a leaf blower to the stump of your right arm.

00:02:53 Jesse Host It's gonna be like *Mad Max: Fury Road*, only instead of a guitar that spews flames, *[laughing]* it's a guy on a giant spring with a leaf blower.

[Jean laughs.]

00:03:02 John Host That guy's the Doof Warrior? You'd be the Leaf Warrior.

00:03:05 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:03:06 John Host Jean Grae, thanks for being here.

00:03:08 Jean Guest Those were good jokes.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:03:09 John Host Well, look...

00:03:11 Jean Guest *[Laughs.]* That's where my humor's at right now.

00:03:13 John Host What happened was—

00:03:14 Jean Guest I just listen a lot, and I'm like—

00:03:14 John Host Yeah.

00:03:16 Jean Guest "That was a fun chuckle."

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

00:03:17 John Host What—yeah, that's more accurate. That's more accurate than "good jokes."

[Jean laughs.]

I'll say that was a fun chuckle. I'll take that.

00:03:22 Jean Guest I enjoy the—and relatable now!

00:03:24 John Host That's right.

00:03:26 Jean Guest Because there are, um, lawnmowers and leaf blowers in my neighborhood. This is a life I've never lived!

00:03:31 John Host Right, because you have now moved to Balmer? Maryland.

00:03:34 Jean Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:03:36 John Host What used to be called, uh, "Washington, DC's Brooklyn." I read that in a newspaper article.

00:03:41 Jean Guest What year was that?

00:03:43 John Host That, uh—that was in the sixties. When Brooklyn was not a good thing. It used to be called Losers Town, too, back then. *[Laughs.]*

00:03:51 Jean Guest So they were like, "Uh, this is where a lot of Black people are in the city. It's the same."

00:03:56 John Host That's right. That's right.

00:03:59 Jean Guest *[Laughs.] Scary.*

00:04:00 John Host And then in 1975, they got some advertising executives to come up with a new nickname for Baltimore.

00:04:05 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:04:06 John Host And that nickname is, as you know, Charm City.

00:04:10 Jean Guest Yeah. It's very charming.

00:04:12 John Host Charm City. Jean, you have a new home in Baltimore, Maryland.

00:04:15 Jean Guest Yep!

00:04:17 John Host You are getting ready to celebrate, uh, the winter solstice.

00:04:22 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:04:23 John Host Saturnalia, the darkest night of the year, and all attendant holidays.

00:04:24 Jean Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

00:04:26 John Host For the first time. And good thing! Because we are here to adjudicate cases about holiday decor—

00:04:31 Jean Guest Awesome.

00:04:32 John Host —traditions, home eating, and more. So let's get into it!

00:04:36 Jesse Host Here's something from Corey.

"My wife and I always get into a dispute this time of year. When we set up our Christmas nativity scene—"

[Jean starts quietly cracking up.]

"—she has the shepherds and Wise Men face in, toward the baby Jesus, which is more like real life."

[John snorts.]

"I prefer them to be faced outward, toward the viewer. Like a stage. Who's right?"

00:04:57 John Host *[Laughs.]* J—I can see and hear that, uh, Jean Grae is laughing at something. She's having a pleasant chuckle.

00:05:05 Jean Guest *[Coughs, recovers from laughter.]*

Yes.

00:05:07 John Host What's happening, Jean? What are you reacting to?

00:05:08 Jean Guest Well, I'm—*[laughs]*—I'm looking at the photo, and, um, I re—

00:05:11 John Host Right. This is a photo of their nativity scene.

00:05:13 Jean Guest *[Stifles laughter.]* It's a photo of the nativity.

00:05:15 John Host In Corey's house.

00:05:16 Jean Guest And then I immediately realized that it is so awesome to have it have some sort of realism, instead of to function like a stage play, like I normally see nativities doing.

00:05:31 John Host Right.

00:05:32 Jean Guest Because immediately in my mind, I want to like—

[Singing, as all three stifle laughter]

*I'm Wise Man number one, and I brought the frankincense!
But wait! I'm Wise Man number two, and I've got the myrrh!*

And then the—

I'm Wise Man number three, and no one's more important than me! I brought GOLD!

[Speaking]

Like, it's not a musical!

[John laughs.]

00:05:52 Jesse Host I see in this picture here baby Jesus framing his head with his hands, and giving a little shake.

00:05:58 Jean Guest *[Laughs.]* "Haaaa! Cha cha!"

00:06:01 Jesse Host He's selling the whole "son of God" thing. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:02 John Host Well... I think that it would not be too controversial to say that religion is theatre, to a certain degree.

00:06:09 Jean Guest Acceptable.

00:06:11 John Host There is no realism in a nativity scene. Because there are competing descriptions in the Gospels about what actually happened in this manger. For sure, there's no—the Magi, the bearers of the frankincense, gold, and myrrh. By the way, good job, Magi who brought gold! That's a good gift.

00:06:27 Jean Guest Yeah! It's the best one.

00:06:28 John Host *[Laughs.]* Right?

00:06:29 Jean Guest Like, what—you brought oil? And then, uh, incense. Like, get outta here. Somebody brought gold. You better bring it.

00:06:35 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah!

00:06:36 Jean Guest Like, what are you doing? I don't care about the other two.

00:06:38 John Host "I'll take the gold. You—you two Magi can go." *[Stifles laughter.]* That's the first words of baby Jesus. "Gimme the gold."

00:06:44 Jean Guest "Gimme the gold."

00:06:45 Jesse Host If a Magi came to your birth, what would you like to, uh—the Magi to bring?

00:06:50 John Host Ooh.

[John or Jean exhales thoughtfully.]

00:06:51 Jesse Host "The Magus" is the singular Magi, I guess.

00:06:54 John Host So we're taking frankincense, myrrh, and gold off the table.

00:06:56 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:06:57 Jesse Host Yeah, those are—let's say three Magi have brought you those three things.

00:07:00 Jean Guest Ah.

00:07:01 Jesse Host But hark! Lo!

00:07:03 Jean Guest A fourth!

00:07:04 Jesse Host Upon the horizon is a fourth Magus!

00:07:06 John Host What's he bringing, Jean? Or she, or they.

00:07:10 Jean Guest Um, what—

00:07:11 John Host For you.

00:07:12 Jean Guest What is their whole deal? Like, what do they do? Are they supposed to be able to be like, "Oh, I know—" Were they like, "Oh, I know who you're gonna be, and so we brought this stuff"?

00:07:21 John Host Alternately they are Wise Men or Kings.

00:07:26 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:07:27 John Host Who were drawn to visit the baby Jesus, because they heard this prophecy that he was gonna be... hot stuff.

00:07:35 Jean Guest Oh!

00:07:36 Jesse Host Yeah, they're sort of a stamp of legitimacy. It's like, uh, you know, the Prime Minister of Canada calling Joe Biden.

00:07:43 John Host *[Laughing]* That's right.

00:07:44 Jean Guest Okay.

00:07:45 John Host That's right.

00:07:46 Jesse Host They're saying, "Congratulations on being the son of God."

00:07:49 John Host Right.

00:07:51 Jean Guest Um—yeah. I would want that to—I would want like, the full truth, about, like, stuff. Or I would basically, like, want a new home. 'Cause I don't know how they, like, brought him a bunch of stuff, but they were like, "You're in a barn! Cool! Bye-bye, kid! Child!"

00:08:02 John Host Yeah. Not—not merely in a barn, I learned!

00:08:06 Jean Guest Yeah, it's messed—it's—oh.

00:08:08 John Host A trough. A manger—

00:08:10 Jean Guest You know—

00:08:11 John Host I always thought the manger was the barn. But the manger is a food trough! That he—that they used as his cradle!

00:08:18 Jean Guest *[Deep sigh.]* Yeah, maybe a cradle.

00:08:19 John Host Which makes sense, because it's mohn-jey, for—M-A-N-G-E-R. It's—it's the—

00:08:22 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:08:23 John Host The cognate is—or whatever it is. The word word is that.

00:08:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jean:** Yeah, so... maybe a bed.

Jesse: Plus there's no crib for his bed.

00:08:27 John Host Right.

00:08:28 Jean Guest Yeah.

00:08:29 John Host They didn't have a crib. They—they put him in a bowl! *[Laughs.]* They put the baby Jesus in a food bowl.

00:08:35 Jesse Host Yeah. Sweet head and all.

00:08:36 Jean Guest So maybe—maybe a bed, and not gold.

00:08:37 John Host Maybe a bed. Maybe—yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:08:38 Jesse Host A bed.

00:08:39 John Host Yeah.

00:08:40 Jean Guest "'Cause I can't use the gold."

00:08:41 Jesse Host That is more practical, 'cause my first thought was ham.

[John and Jean crack up, Jesse stifles laughter.]

Like a big ham. Like, maybe like a honey-baked spiral cut type deal?

00:08:49 Jean Guest For a baby?!

00:08:51 Jesse Host Just what—something for everybody to gnaw on! 'Cause everybody's coming in.

00:08:54 Jean Guest Ohhh, I get it!

00:08:55 Jesse Host You know what I mean?

00:08:56 John Host Yeah. It's a—like a—yeah. If ham is in your dietary wheelhouse, that's always a pleasant gift. It lasts for years. Thirty-three years, I believe.

00:09:04 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:09:05 John Host Biblically speaking.

00:09:06 Jean Guest How about antibiotics?

00:09:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Laughing]* That would be good, too!

Jesse: Oh, yeah. That'd be good.

Jean: Like, she just gave birth.

00:09:10 Jesse Host In case there was an infection.

00:09:11 John Host Yeah.

00:09:12 Jean Guest Yeah, there's a lot—he's in a trough. Like—hm, clean him up!

00:09:14 Jesse Host Or just the germ theory of disease!

00:09:16 Jean Guest Yeah, that—! Oh, that's great.

00:09:18 Jesse Host Just the knowledge that people should wash their hands—

00:09:19 Jean Guest Uh-huh.

00:09:21 Jesse Host —while delivering the baby.

00:09:22 John Host Also, soak the beans. Soak the beans.

00:09:23 Jesse Host Yeah.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Don't forget to soak the beans.

00:09:28 John Host That's a *Kasper Hauser* reference, look it up.

00:09:29 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:09:30 John Host The *Kasper Hauser Radio*—what is it, *Comedy Podcast*?

00:09:32 Jesse Host Yeah, *Kasper Hauser Comedy Podcast*. You need that.

00:09:34 John Host Yeah. Yeah, go check that out on MaximumFun.org. Yeah. *[Clears throat.]* I agree. Like, I'm—the realism here—

00:09:41 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:09:42 John Host —that informs Corey's dispute is, uh, fakeism. Because of course—*[stifles laughter]*—this is—there are many different depictions of this moment in the life of the probably historical figure Jesus. They are—in the Gospels, they are often contradictory. These three Magi did not show up until two years after Jesus was born in one of the Gospels.

00:10:04 Jean Guest Oh.

00:10:05 John Host Don't ask me which one; I'm not a Biblical scholar. I looked it up briefly.

00:10:07 Jean Guest Gospel number 14.

00:10:08 John Host Right. And the nativ—

00:10:09 Jean Guest That's how they're labeled.

00:10:11 John Host And the nativity itself was always a piece of theatre! And in fact it started as like, a Christmas pageant! Like a live stage show that was—actually, according to Wikipedia, Saint Francis of Assisi mounted the first live nativity scene in 1221, and that's why they refer to Saint Francis of Assisi as, uh, the Corky Saint Clair of Franciscans.

[Jesse and Jean laugh, John stifles laughter.]

Patron Saint of Community Theatre. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:38 Jean Guest I just—I didn't wanna see it set up like a sitcom.

00:10:40 John Host Right.

00:10:41 Jean Guest Like, I like the fact that they're all doing this. But I would say, like, maybe just make someone, like, break the fourth wall? Just one?

[John laughs.]

Like *The Office*?

00:10:49 Jesse Host Just one sheep is looking out at the audience—
00:10:51 Jean Guest Yes!
00:10:52 Jesse Host —with one eyebrow raised, like, "Come on."
00:10:53 Jean Guest *[Laughing]* Yeah. Yes.
00:10:55 Jesse Host "Son of God?"
00:10:56 Jean Guest "What is this?"
00:10:58 John Host "You're probably wondering how I got here."

[Everyone laughs.]

Flashback!

[More laughter.]

00:11:04 Jean Guest Yes.
00:11:05 John Host Flashback to that sheep being born, going, "Where's my gold and myrrh?"

[More laughter.]

I agree and concur with your wisdom, uh, you two other Magi. This Magi feel—this Wise Person says, uh, it looks better! Seeing their backs. I mean, they are there in veneration of the Christ child, A.

00:11:20 Jean Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
00:11:21 John Host B, if you had them all facing outward, it wouldn't look like a nativity scene. It would look like a display of your *Warhammer* figurines.
00:11:31 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.
00:11:32 John Host This is better.
00:11:33 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*
00:11:34 Jean Guest This is better.
00:11:35 Jesse Host No offense—*[stifles laughter]*—no offense to your display of *Warhammer*, uh, figurines, specifically Stuart Wellington from *The Flop House*.
00:11:40 John Host Yeah, Stu Wellington, who paints *Warhammer* figurines live on Instagram—
00:11:45 Jean Guest Oh.
00:11:46 John Host —uh, I would like you to create a nativity scene of your *Warhammer* figurines.
00:11:49 Jean Guest What am I doing with my life?
00:11:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** I know, right?

Jesse: I know. *[Laughs.]*

00:11:54 Jesse Host All you have is your own church, Jean!
00:11:56 Jean Guest Damn it! *[Stifles laughter.]*
00:11:57 John Host I did forget to mention—

00:11:58 Jean Guest I really need to think differently!

00:12:00 John Host —that Jean has her own church, called the—speaking of religion as performance.

00:12:04 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:12:05 John Host Jean has her own church, which is the Church of the Infinite You.

00:12:08 Jean Guest That's right.

00:12:09 John Host Which meets on occasional Sundays on Twitch, and the—and, uh, everyone follow Jean on Twitter and Instagram. We'll give all the handles at the end.

00:12:18 Jean Guest Yeah.

00:12:20 John Host To find out when the next one is. Because this is some church you can really use.

00:12:22 Jean Guest And, uh, a nice family named the Weissmans (*Wise Mans*) once came to the church, so...

[John and Jesse laugh.]

There you go!

00:12:28 John Host What'd they bring? A ham?

00:12:31 Jean Guest A ham.

00:12:32 John Host Three hams.

00:12:34 Jean Guest They brought me three hams, and I was like, "This is a lot."

00:12:35 John Host "Oh my god. The Weissmans showed up."

00:12:37 Jean Guest And I was like, "That's also an interesting gift, uh, from the Weissmans."

00:12:41 John Host And before I get letters, people of faith, I honor and respect your faith. When I say that, uh, religion is theatre, that is in my opinion a compliment to religion, because theatre is where we come together—when it is safe to do so—and sit in silence, and contemplate bigger truths! And enjoy a communion, both in the audience and with performers on stage who are asking the big questions.

So please do not feel that I am denigrating religion. I am trying to pay it a compliment.

Alright.

00:13:15 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. More items on the docket coming up in just a minute on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

00:13:22 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:13:24 Jesse Promo It's *Judge John Hodgman*. I'm Bailiff Jesse Thorn, with Judge John Hodgman. Every *Judge John Hodgman* episode, of course, is brought to you by the members of Maximum Fun. All the folks who've gone to MaximumFun.org/join to kick in a few bucks to help pay for this production. This week we are also supported, specifically caffeinally, by our friends—

[Jesse and John stifle laughter.]

—at Ruby Coffee! You probably—you may have heard the story of how we hooked up with Ruby Coffee already on *Judge John Hodgman*.

00:13:53	John	Promo	Mm-hm.
00:13:54	Jesse	Promo	But basically, I spent an afternoon trying to find the fanciest coffee that I could possibly get for my wife. I wanted the <u>best</u> coffee, not the most expensive coffee. And I found Ruby Coffee Roasters, I put in an order, my wife really loved it, but when it came, it came with a note from this guy named Jesse who works there, and he says, "Hey! It just so happens I saw your name on the order as it was going out the door. This is a small outfit. And I'm a big MaxFunster! I'm a big <i>Jordan, Jesse, Go!</i> and <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> fan." I was so grateful. And I said, "Listen. There's a lot of coffee snobs at Maximum Fun."
00:14:27	John	Promo	Right.
00:14:28	Jesse	Promo	"Lot of real serious coffee enthusiasts."
00:14:30	John	Promo	Yep. A lot of turtleneck wearers, I noticed when I went by.
00:14:34	Jesse	Promo	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:14:35	John	Promo	You know what I mean?
00:14:36	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> Some real Maynard G Krebses? Is that what you're suggesting?
00:14:38	John	Promo	Yeah. A lot of coffee snobs!
00:14:41	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> Are you describing beatniks, John?
00:14:43	John	Promo	That's right. Beatniks love the coffeehouse—
00:14:45	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> Stereotypical beatniks from the 1950s?
00:14:48	John	Promo	With their bongos, it's like—and their—
00:14:49	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughing]</i> From a sitcom in the early sixties?
00:14:52	John	Promo	That's right. Yep. Their—they love that—
00:14:54	Jesse	Promo	The band from <i>Pee-wee's Playhouse</i> ? Is that what you're describing?
00:14:57	John	Promo	Yessiree, Daddy-o! That's what I'm describing! And what do the beatniks love more than high-quality coffee? Nothing. <i>[Jesse quietly recovers from laughter in the background.]</i> Except maybe soul patches. But you know what I'm saying! It's a high—it's a discerning crew of coffee drinkers at Maximum Fun HQ, and what did they discover when they got some of that Ruby Coffee?
00:15:14	Jesse	Promo	They loved it! I just checked in with my wife. I'm like, "How's that coffee that we got in the mail?" and she said, "Oh, it's great! Of course it's great!" <i>[Laughs.]</i> It's great! So, uh, they set up a special deal. We swapped coffee for a couple ad spots. They set up a special deal for <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> listeners. RubyCoffeeRoasters.com . Use the discount code "JJHO" to get 20% off your first shipment of any

subscription, or 15% off of a one-time coffee purchase. RubyCoffeeRoasters.com, and the code is "JJHO."

I actually got an email yesterday from Jesse at Ruby Coffee Roasters.

00:15:50 John Promo

Yeah?

00:15:51 Jesse Promo

He told me they have—*[stifles laughter]*—they are like, flying out the door. *Judge John Hodgman* listeners have been so supportive, and he was, like—he was, like—I don't know if an email can be in tears, but he was awed.

[John chuckles.]

By the response. *[Chuckles.]* So thanks to him, and thanks to our listeners!

00:16:10 John Promo

One of the listeners even told Jesse that they were going to refuse to use the discount code. Because they wanted to support a small business. And this is a small business! Ruby Coffee Roasters is a small coffee-roasting company based in Nelsonville, Wisconsin, population of 191. Quality coffee sourced from a variety of direct relationships with farmers, and small coffee import/export companies who work directly with small farmers.

They are roasting coffee out of love, and sending it to you for love. And it's delicious stuff. And even though it's nice of you to support them... take advantage of this discount code, why don't you? You deserve a treat! Go to RubyCoffeeRoasters.com, and use discount code "JJHO."

That's RubyCoffeeRoasters.com, discount code "JJHO."

00:16:58 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:17:00 Promo Clip

Music: Upbeat, fun music.

Emily Heller: Does our podcast deep-dive into the weirdest Wikipedia pages we can find?

Lisa Hanawalt: Yeees! Do we learn about scam artists, remote islands, horrible mascots, beautiful diseases, and mythical monsters?

Emily: Yes, yes, yes, absolutely, and yes! Do we retain any of this knowledge?

Emily & Lisa: Eeeeh?

Lisa: Probably not.

Emily: I'm Emily Heller.

Lisa: I'm Lisa Hanawalt.

00:17:18 Promo Clip

Emily: We make art! And comedy. And TV shows. And also the podcast [Baby Geniuses](http://BabyGeniuses). For the past eight years, we've been trying to learn new things about the world and each other every episode.

Lisa: But let's be honest, this podcast is mostly about two friends hanging out, shooting the breeze, and making each other laugh. We're horny. We like gardening and horses. And we get real stupid on here.

Emily: But, like, in a smart way!

Lisa: Yeah.

Emily: Join us! Every other week on Maximum Fun.

Music: *Baby Geniuses, tell us something we don't know!*

[Music ends.]

00:17:44 Sound Effect Transition

[Three gavel bangs.]

00:17:47 Jesse Host

Welcome back to the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. We're clearing the docket this week with our friend Jean Grae. Here is a case from Leah:

"My husband and I traditionally do not get too much into Christmas decorations, for various reasons. Not the least of which is that he's Jewish, and I am a lapsed Catholic. However, during this pandemic year, the spirit of Christmas has struck me to the core. I want to go all out with Christmas decorations to bring some joy and whimsy to this dark winter. I have my eye on a fiber optic rainbow extravaganza Christmas tree from Hammacher Schlemmer."

00:18:23 John Host

Yesss!

[John laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:18:25 Jesse Host

"Which he thinks is garish."

[John laughs harder.]

"He prefers a more natural and understated tree. I want an explosion of color, and maybe an inflatable Frosty the Snowman on our lawn. Help us decide whose design aesthetic prevails."

00:18:40 John Host

Jean, have you received the most recent Hammacher Schlemmer catalogue in the mails?

00:18:45 Jean Guest

I have not.

00:18:46 John Host

I'm sure your—your new address is updating throughout the catalogue communities.

00:18:51 Jean Guest

[Chuckles.] I hope so.

00:18:52 John Host

So it'll be coming. So, alright. I have received it, so I knew exactly—

[Jean gasps.]

—what Leah was talking about, and I found it on their website. I sent—I put a link in the document that you can all now open.

00:19:02 Jean Guest

Ohhh...

00:19:04 John Host

This is my present to you.

00:19:05 Jean Guest Awww.

00:19:06 John Host Do you see it? The White Northern Lights Tree? I don't know know why they have to call it the White Northern Lights Tree.

00:19:09 Jean Guest It's a joy—you know why it says "White Northern Lights."
[John laughs.]
Tch. This is why I don't order this catalogue anymore.

00:19:16 John Host *[Laughs.]* This is a full, fluffy—

00:19:22 Jean Guest Wow.

00:19:23 John Host —fiber-optically, uh, pine-needed fir tree imitation... that has programmable lights? It can—I think it can pulse, and change?

00:19:35 Jean Guest Yeah!

00:19:36 John Host It says it creates, "A dancing cascade of colors along its branches." I gotta say, what do—what do you think about this in their home, Jean?

00:19:45 Jean Guest Um, I think that that is awesome. And as someone who grew up in a—my dad was a very strict Muslim.

00:19:57 John Host Mm-hm.

00:19:58 Jean Guest And my mom was sort of like, "I'm everything," but she didn't get to celebrate that. So we never got the opportunity to like, have Christmas in the house. I had my first, like, real Christmas, and like, Christmas tree, like, three years ago.

00:20:13 John Host Oh, wow!

00:20:14 Jean Guest And... man. I... love—
[John or Jesse laughs quietly, Jean stifles laughter.]
I love Christmas so much! I am not a religious person, of—I—

00:20:22 John Host No!

00:20:23 Jean Guest I just—the feeling of it. The idea of it. The—

00:20:26 John Host Neither is Christmas. *[Inaudible.]*

00:20:28 Jean Guest No, it's not! It's got his name in it, but hm-mm!

00:20:32 John Host Yeah.

00:20:33 Jean Guest I was so excited to do it. I was, um, just talking to Quelle about, like—my mom took us when we were kids to go see the Santa at Macy's. Like, the Macy's Macy's.

00:20:44 John Host Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:20:45 Jean Guest Not a Macy's.

00:20:46 John Host Yeah.

00:20:48 Jean Guest Macy's, uh, you know, uh—

00:20:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Macy's Prime.
Jean: *Miracle* Macy's.

John: Right.

Jesse: The *Miracle on 34th Street* Santa.

Jean: The *Miracle on 34th Macy's*!

00:20:54 John Host Yeah.

00:20:55 Jean Guest So we got to—you know, it was like, ten blocks away from us. And she got in a whole bunch of trouble because of it. And she was like, "No, I want my kids to have this experience." And I still have the picture of us, like, sitting on Santa's lap, and I look very upset.

But the idea that she was like, "No, you should get to have these experiences! We're at, like, this Macy's. It's magical. It doesn't matter; you don't have to be a part of this faith or anything to appreciate celebrating, or feeling good, or good feels, and lights, and—you know? And toys, and—"

00:21:27 John Host Right.

00:21:28 Jean Guest So we do big Christmas. And this year especially, 'cause everything has been horrible, I'm like, "No, we should go all out." Like, yeah, let's get a blow-up snowman! [*Stifles laughter.*] And a Santa, and—and like, maybe one of the car wash tube guys for no reason, and—

[*Jesse laughs, John cracks up.*]

—paint him in Christmas colors. They have them online, they're \$129—

00:21:53 John Host Yeah.

00:21:54 Jean Guest —and the pump is 99. And they—you can get the one with two legs, which is much better than the one with one leg.

00:22:00 John Host Well, the one with one leg is just a tube. He's just a worm.

00:22:03 Jean Guest He's just a tube.

00:22:04 John Host Right.

00:22:05 Jean Guest And I'm like, "Let's go all out, to have some, like... joy."

00:22:09 John Host Yeah.

00:22:10 Jean Guest Just... yeah. Go for it. I love this tree. I don't know if it would be our only tree? But...

00:22:16 John Host You mean you might get two of them?

00:22:17 Jean Guest Yeah.

00:22:18 John Host Yeah. Well, they do come in a four-and-a-half-foot size, and a seven-and-a-half-foot size.

00:22:23 Jean Guest Well, I think you solved the problem.

00:22:24 Jesse Host I mean, the—the husband here is not wrong that it is obscenely garish.

00:22:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jean:** Mm-hm! Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Mm-hm!

John: Yes. Yes.

00:22:31 Jesse Host [*Stifling laughter*] It's also extremely expensive.

00:22:32 John Host That is true. That is true.

00:22:33 Jean Guest Oh, is it? I didn't look at that.

00:22:35 John Host Well—

00:22:36 Jesse Host It costs about as much as ten regular Christmas trees.

00:22:39 Jean Guest Oh! Well...

00:22:39 John Host Uh, unless you're in Manhattan.

00:22:42 Jesse Host Oh. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:22:43 John Host Then it's the cost of two.

[Jean laughs, John stifles laughter.]

It's \$500. For the seven-and-a-half-foot one, it's \$500. And for the four-and-a-half-foot one, it's 250. But you really need to have both—

00:22:52 Jean Guest Oh, that's not bad.

00:22:54 John Host You really need to have both to get the mother-and-child, uh, garish Christmas tree look.

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

00:22:59 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:23:00 Jesse Host I feel like if you spend the \$500 to buy the seven-and-a-half-foot version of this tree, you are sort of morally obliged to spend the rest of the money to get the hologram Liberace to perform in front of it.

[John and Jean crack up.]

00:23:13 John Host You mean the rest of the money in the world? *[Laughs.]*

00:23:15 Jesse Host Yeah. *[Laughs]*

00:23:17 Jean Guest All of it? *[Laughs.]*

Why not the little tree? Why not the smaller one, like, next to the bigger one, or in another room?

00:23:24 Jesse Host No, go hard or go home.

00:23:24 John Host Yeah.

00:23:25 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* That's my feeling about these rainbow trees.

00:23:27 Jean Guest No. I—I think—I think you guys are, um, skimping on the factor of walking—because all we have is being inside. So don't just make that one room the special room. Like, put something in another room, and you're like, "Oh, this is a Christmas tree," and then you go into another room, you're like, "But what about THIS Christmas tree?"

00:23:48 John Host Right.

00:23:49 Jesse Host Ohhh.

00:23:50 Jean Guest "This is a whole new Christmas!" I think it's different this year. I think put as much joy in different rooms as you can. If you got the space.

00:23:58 Jesse Host I have always wanted one of those aluminum Christmas trees.

00:24:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Jesse:** That have, you know, colored uplights.

Jean: Mm-hm.

John: Mm-hm. That mid-century modern?

00:24:05 Jesse Host Yeah. I think those are really neat.

00:24:07 Jean Guest You should get one.

00:24:08 John Host I always have had a—a natural Christmas tree. Because what better way to celebrate, whether it is the birth of Christ or the general sense of rebirth after the longest night in the year? Because after all, Christmas is a synthetic observance. Taking in all different kinds of traditions—pre-Christian Pagan traditions of Yule in Germany, and across the Celtic area, and then obviously later, all kinds of commercial traditions, of, uh, Coca-Cola and Santa Claus, and all those other sort of commercially invented traditions—that kinda got rebranded with Christianity, uh, sometime during the early Christian church.

But in fact, Christmas itself was not celebrated by most Christians—indeed, the Puritans who invaded and then lived in New England—the region of, uh, Southeast Canada where I am from—abhorred Christmas. They thought it was a completely decadent tradition, and essentially a Pagan tradition. Wasn't until the Victorian Era the Christmas that we know came to be propagated throughout the English-speaking world.

So the point that I'm saying is, there are a lot of different traditions. My tradition was always to get a natural tree in my home, with my mom and dad, and then in my own home. Because what better way to celebrate rebirth during the darkest night of the year than... killing a tree and watching it die slowly?

[Jesse and/or Jean laugh quietly.]

But! My grandmother always had—uh, not a mid-century modern aluminum tree like you speak of, Jesse, but just a really classic fakey tree. Fakey hardware store tree. That was—the needles were all silver. And there was a—

00:25:56 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:25:57 John Host I have a fondness for that as well! And this particular year, as you point out, Jean—this is a year where we really need a lot of light in all of this darkness. I think it's a great time—like, as, in many ways, the way we've been reevaluating our relationship with work, our relationship with our friends and our family, our relationship with our government, what we want from a society—it's a good time to just go ahead and try something new for Christmas.

And if Leah and her husband are in a position, uh, financially, to splurge on the seven-and-a-half-foot tree? I think they should do it. Because here's—here's what. You have this tree for this year, and you just enjoy this...

00:26:42 Jean Guest Mm-hm!

00:26:44 John Host ...garish display. And then you can keep it next year if you love it. Or I bet you could donate it to a school, or to a nursing home.

00:26:53 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:26:54 John Host Or to some other organization that might appreciate it next year. I would hope that you would make some, you know, equal donation to a charitable organization, or to people who are in need. Like, if you only have \$500 left in your life, take care of yourself. Don't buy this tree. But if you buy this tree—if you can afford \$500 for this cuckoo tree, then put \$500 into the hands of people who need it.

And I think that's a very nice way to create a dancing cascade of new experiences, in your Christmas and in others, or your holiday.

00:27:29 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:27:31 Jean Guest Quite like the Northern Lights themselves.

00:27:33 John Host A dancing cascade of colors?

00:27:35 Jean Guest That's right.

00:27:36 John Host Yeah. One thing that I used to do with my son—we would play a game when—remember the SkyMall catalogue?

00:27:43 Jean Guest Oh, yeah.

00:27:44 John Host Well, the SkyMall has gone to the great, uh, recycling bin in the sky.

00:27:48 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:27:49 Jesse Host We'll always have SkyMaul, M-A-U-L, *Kasper Hauser's* pair of perfect books.

00:27:55 John Host Pair of perfect SkyMall parodies, yeah.

00:27:57 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:27:58 John Host But I've put a link in the document, which you guys can both open if you don't mind, because we used to play a game with my—my son and I, in the SkyMall catalogue, where we would go page by page, while we were maybe flying to a place and passing the time. And we would—our agreement was, as a thought experiment, if you have to buy something on each page, what would it be?

And while SkyMall's no longer around, Hammacher Schlemmer certainly is a good way to do this. So I've sent you the link to their New Arrivals page.

[Jean laughs quietly.]

So Jean and Jesse. Here on the New Arrivals page, top row, there are four items. You have to pick one. The 750-watt wall outlet heater, the Hammacher Schlemmer Classic Lionel Train that goes around a tree, children's race car simulator, or four-foot twinkling Christmas bubble light.

00:28:46 Jean Guest *[Chuckles.]* Oof. Jesse—

00:28:49 Jesse Host This is easy for me; I—I love that giant bubble light.

[John and Jean laugh.]

This is something distasteful that I could get into in an instant. I, uh—you know, I—this summer, my father passed away, and there's never been—in my life, anyway—a greater bubble light enthusiast than my

dad. Like, my dad would plug in the bubble lights that he had bought at, uh—*[stifles laughter]*—at Cole Hardware down the street from our house, and he would like, giggle with glee as they feebly bubbled on our Christmas tree.

[Jesse and one or both of the others laugh.]

Just barely working. Just always barely working.

[More laughter.]

He loved them so much. Uh, and this one, which is four feet tall, seems—seems perfect! *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:29:32 John Host Alright, four foot tall—that—Jean, do you concur, or do you get something else?

00:29:37 Jean Guest No, something else. The race car simulator, hands down.

[Jesse and John laugh.]

Because I have been known to, any time I see like a—a—if I'm somewhere and I see those, like, kids', like, the little horses outside a supermarket? Just anything that a—that is only for children, and I should not be able to fit into, I will cram myself into that area. And get on that child's toy, and make children wait until—

[John laughs.]

And I have spent like \$20 just being there for a long time. Perhaps I was drinking, perhaps I was completely sober. Nothing would give me greater joy than to put this in—*[laughs]*—in the living room. And to randomly... hurt myself.

00:30:22 John Host *[Laughs.]* Trying to get into it. It's pretty small!

00:30:24 Jean Guest Trying to get into this. I'm sure I would break it, and my knees would be up in my ears. But, um, it would bring—it would bring me a great amount of joy.

00:30:33 Jesse Host I have to say, though, John—

00:30:34 John Host Yeah.

00:30:35 Jesse Host —that you unnaturally constrained our choices. And on my front page as it appeared on my computer screen, the item I would choose above all others, comfortably, by an enormous margin, is item 96554, the illuminated earwax remover.

[John and Jean crack up.]

This is the ear-cleaning tool that uses five LEDs—

00:30:56 Jean Guest Oh!

00:30:57 Jesse Host —to illuminate the ear canal.

00:30:59 John Host Mm-hm?

00:31:00 Jesse Host And an integrated 1080p camera to see and target wax build-up. So you hold it in your hand, shove it in your ear—

[Jesse and Jean stifle laughter.]

—and look at your phone, where there's like a colonoscopy camera, broadcasting directly to your phone via Bluetooth.

[All three laugh.]

00:31:14 Jean Guest Why?!

00:31:15 John Host Alright, I'll give—I'll give you that one. Jean? I will offer you one more chance to trade up.

00:31:22 Jean Guest I'm not gonna trade up, but if it were anything else, it would be the hand pain-relieving mitt, because I would just keep them on all the time. *[Laughs.]*

00:31:32 John Host It's—

00:31:33 Jean Guest Just as an excuse. To be like, "Oh, I'm sorry, I can't." I'd just—just typing with them. Just everything. I'd be like, "I gotta wear these!"

00:31:39 John Host It just looks like a giant—it looks like a giant black vortex oven mitt.

00:31:43 Jean Guest Yes! *[Laughs.]*

00:31:44 John Host That has mysterious red light inside of it.

00:31:45 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:31:46 Jean Guest It has no—no thumb pocket, you just your whole hand is in it, and you can't get anything done.

00:31:52 Jesse Host The mysterious red light cannot be overstated here. The myst—its mysteriousness—

[Jean and Jesse laugh.]

Its odd quality, and like the—you know, the neoprene body glove—ness of this thing that—this—

00:32:03 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:32:05 Jesse Host It really is like, anything could be inside there.

00:32:09 Jean Guest It says it's—

00:32:10 Jesse Host Like, it's designed to be a void into which—

[Jean laughs.]

It's like a trust fall. Where you put your hand into the void, and a red light comes out. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:18 Jean Guest It says it's "mitten-like."

[Jesse and Jean laugh.]

It's mittenesque. It's not a mitten.

00:32:23 Jesse Host Well, you know, uh—"For legal reasons, we cannot claim it's—" *[Laughs.]*

00:32:26 Jean Guest *[Laughs.]* We cannot.

00:32:27 Jesse Host "Unfortunately fails to meet the FDA standard for mitten."

00:32:31 Jean Guest It's a hand—it's a hand pocket. It's an outside hand pocket.

00:32:34 John Host Well, alright. So Jesse, you get the illuminated earwax remover.

00:32:38 Jesse Host *[Whispers]* Yes...

[Jean laughs.]

00:32:39 John Host Jean? For this holiday season, I'm giving you the cordless LED mysterious hand pain-relieving mitt.

00:32:46 Jean Guest Wooo! Two of them!

00:32:48 John Host I'm glad none of you snapped up the world's largest putting pool table.

[John and someone else laugh quietly.]

It's a putting—it's a putting surface that's shaped like a pool table. If you—this is a time when we all should try to be a little less material, especially since everyone's—a lot of people are hurting these days. If you wanna make your holiday season giftless—which is kinda a awesome thing to do—just, uh, get a free copy of the Hammacher Schlemmer—*[laughs]*—the Hammacher Schlemmer catalogue, and sit down with your family, and pay this thought experiment: "What junk would I take if I had to take something?"

And you will be so happy that no one gave you a single gift this year. And as you do it, just simply send \$25 to MaximumFun.org as a royalty. 'Cause I invented this game. Page By Page.

00:33:36 Jean Guest Wait, there's an air-propelled bowling game... Wait a second...

00:33:41 John Host *[Laughs.]* Oh, there's more. You can always load more.

00:33:41 Jean Guest I forgot. There's so much more.

00:33:46 John Host There's so much more.

00:33:47 Jean Guest *[Quietly, to herself]* Basketball hoop... Where would I put that?

00:33:52 John Host Jean, please close the Hammacher Schlemmer website.

00:33:55 Jean Guest Okay, but can I just say one more thing that we bought for the house?

00:33:58 John Host Yeah, please!

00:34:00 Jean Guest Um, this is going along with that, like, needing to find, like, joy all over the place. So I—I rec—well, like in the past two years, I found out about the wonder of electric fireplace inserts.

00:34:15 John Host Sure.

00:34:17 Jean Guest 'Cause we had one in our last place, and we, like, did an entire built-in around it, and it was amazing and wonderful. I grew up with a fireplace, and al—and never had it again in another, like, house or apartment or anything. And although this is a very old house, a lot of things were covered up, so we believe there's a fireplace hiding. But we did not wanna be in this house without a fireplace. So... In—

00:34:47 John Host You're just smashing down walls looking for it?

00:34:50 Jean Guest *[Laughs.]* I would like to!

00:34:51 John Host I know you would.

00:34:52 Jean Guest In, um, trying to find the right electric fireplace insert to build into

something I'm creating—like, I'm building mantels around them—we now have four of them. And they all operate differently, but one of the best things that I did in the past month was to put them all in the living room, and turn them all on. At once.

00:35:21 John Host Four fireplace inserts?

00:35:23 Jean Guest Yes.

00:35:24 John Host One for each wall?

00:35:25 Jean Guest No, some just in the middle of the floor—

00:35:27 John Host *[Laughing]* Okay.

00:35:28 Jean Guest —'cause they're just the log. *[Laughs.]* Some in the cabinet.

00:35:32 John Host Jean, would you do me a favor? When—when—when we're all—

00:35:35 Jean Guest Mm-hm! I've already taken a picture. *[Laughs.]*

00:35:37 John Host Okay, yeah. Let's—please send it in to Jennifer Marmor so we can get that up on the *Judge John Hodgman* Instagram.

00:35:39 Jean Guest Mm-hm. Mm-hm. And they're very cheap!

00:35:44 John Host Now—there we go. That's another way to liven up the winter solstice. Foldaway illuminated bowling arcade game.

Let's close the Hammacher Schlemmer catalogue and move on to some more justice.

00:35:56 Jean Guest Mmm.

00:35:58 Jesse Host Erin says:

"We live in Michigan, which gets cold in the winter! Every winter, my husband and I battle over the thermostat. I'm cold, he's hot. I turn the heat up—"

00:36:08 John Host Mm-hm.

00:36:10 Jesse Host "—he turns it back down. I wear slippers, and sweatshirts, and blankets. All I want is to be cozy and not shivering while wearing multiple layers. He frequently turns the heat down to 65 to 67 degrees."

[John whistles.]

00:36:25 Jean Guest Eugh.

00:36:27 Jesse Host "I want Judge Hodgman to order that we maintain our thermostat at a minimum of 70 degrees in the winter months, which is what I feel is a typical or average household temperature. I'd really prefer 72 degrees to be extra cozy, but will compromise at 70 degrees."

00:36:46 Jean Guest Mm.

00:36:47 John Host Michigan is a cold, cold place in the winter!

00:36:49 Jean Guest Mm-hm!

00:36:50 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* You know what Michigan is?

00:36:51 John Host No.

00:36:54 Jesse Host Mitten-like!

[John and Jean laugh.]

00:36:56 John Host It's true. It's true!

00:36:59 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:37:00 John Host It's like a giant, mysterious hand warmer. It's the giant, mysterious hand warmer of the Great Lakes!

00:37:04 Jean Guest That's what they call it!

00:37:05 Jesse Host Yeah, why is that red light emanating from it?

[John and Jean laugh, Jesse stifles laughter.]

What is the glow?

00:37:11 John Host *[Laughs, sighs.]* I—you know, this is such a common dispute. In life, and certainly in the *Judge John Hodgman* mail bag. I have heard some hearsay over the years that gender-assigned-at-birth men tend to run biologically hotter than gender-assigned-at-birth women.

00:37:34 Jesse Host There's research about that in offices.

00:37:37 John Host Is there?

00:37:39 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:37:40 John Host Yeah. And therefore there is this fight over the thermostat, constantly.

00:37:45 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:37:46 John Host And what—what do you think, Jean? Do you and Quelle, your husband, have this dispute?

00:37:52 Jean Guest Well, this is our first time—I mean, also I think my first time living in a place where we are in control of our own heat.

00:38:01 John Host Oh, right! Right.

00:38:02 Jean Guest And having a thermostat. Because coming from New York, like, that's not a thing.

00:38:04 John Host Right.

00:38:06 Jean Guest Like, it's just on, and you're either like, "My skin is falling off! I'm dying! I'm burning! It's so hot!"

00:38:12 John Host Right.

00:38:13 Jean Guest Or like, "I'm FREEZING!"

00:38:14 John Host Right.

00:38:15 Jean Guest So we've never had the chance to do that. And this is our first, uh, thermostat living together. He's had, you know, this experience before. And he is a generally—like a walking... radiator that's just constantly—like a bleeding radiator.

00:38:36 John Host Right. Right. Right.

00:38:37 Jean Guest He is very warm, all the time. And I generally—um, because I'm dead inside—

[John and/or Jesse laugh.]

—I'm just freezing.

00:38:47 John Host That's why you have four fireplace inserts in one room.

00:38:49 Jean Guest *[Laughs.]* It is why I have them all over the place.

00:38:51 John Host That's right.

00:38:52 Jean Guest And which is also part of our kind of compromise, so I can get my, like, heat in areas where I really want it. But—

00:38:58 Jesse Host Jean sleeps on one of those heated logs, like a lizard in a terrarium.

[Jean laughs, John cracks up.]

00:39:01 Jean Guest I do! Let me tell you—

00:39:04 John Host Yeah.

00:39:05 Jean Guest —if I could enclose part of the bedroom like that, I would 100% do it.

[Jesse laughs.]

And then just like, a little water bowl—

00:39:12 John Host Mm-hm!

00:39:13 Jean Guest —and I would roll over and just throw my face into it, 'cause I get very thirsty at night. That sounds awesome. *[Laughs.]*

00:39:17 John Host That's right.

00:39:19 Jesse Host A few crickets to munch. *[Laughs.]*

00:39:22 Jean Guest A few crickets! Listen! Thank you! I think—we haven't finished our bedroom, and maybe this is part of the construct.

00:39:29 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:39:31 Jean Guest Just Jean's... heat lamp terrarium.

00:39:32 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

00:39:33 John Host Yep. Build—yeah, we oughta—I'll start a "Build Jean a Terrarium" fund.

00:39:36 Jean Guest Thank you.

00:39:37 John Host Yeah.

00:39:38 Jean Guest Please go to Jean—BuildJeanATerrarium.com. And donate what you can! Um... You know, just donate any money you're gonna use for yourself, really, is what I'm asking.

00:39:48 John Host Yeah. If you're buying a \$500 eight-foot fiber-optic tree...

00:39:51 Jean Guest Mm-hm. Mm-mm.

00:39:52 John Host Throw Jean a little bit of money so she can buy that multicolor gravel to put on the floor of her bedroom.

[Jesse laughs.]

00:39:56 Jean Guest Yeah, buy me that—just give me that \$500.

[John laughs.]

Just give me—I need the gravel. What are we really talking about here? Um, but—

00:40:06 John Host So as things are getting colder in Baltimore—

00:40:07 Jean Guest Yeah.

00:40:08 John Host —are you guys starting to fight over that thermostat, or what?

00:40:09 Jean Guest No! We don't fight. Um, I think 70-72 feels like the normal thing that I've heard in life, and we've tried it a few times.

00:40:20 John Host Mm-hm.

00:40:21 Jean Guest I think it's great in the sss—uh, I—I think 70's a good compromise! I didn't know I was gonna feel the difference between something being, like, 69 or 70.

00:40:32 John Host Right.

00:40:33 Jean Guest But that gets to the point in a day, and, um—and if I'm feeling a little cold, I'm like, "Hm. I feel like it should have switched over by now. That feels like a—mm, it's at least fallen below a 68." *[Laughs.]*

00:40:43 John Host Yeah.

00:40:45 Jean Guest I think 70 is—that's where we have it right now.

00:40:49 John Host Does this come up in California, in Los Angeles, Jesse Thorn? Between you and Theresa at all?

00:40:54 Jesse Host No. This was a concern when I lived in San Francisco. A little cooler in the winter in San Francisco.

00:41:00 John Host Mm-hm.

00:41:01 Jesse Host Uh, but I don't think I ever had a thermostat until I moved to Los Angeles—

00:41:07 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:41:08 Jesse Host —that wasn't the kind where you move a little stick left and right.

[Jean and John laugh.]

And you're really looking at five degrees-ish of precision. You know what I mean? Like...

00:41:16 Jean Guest It's not doing anything. Mm-hm.

00:41:17 John Host Right. Right. Right.

00:41:19 Jesse Host It's like a little mercury-powered spring or something, that powers a—a furnace from 1928.

00:41:26 Jean Guest *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:41:27 John Host Right. Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:41:28 Jesse Host My mom—my mom really does have a furnace—*[laughs]*—her furnace is huge and terrifying in the basement.

[Jean gasps.]

And it really is from like, 1930. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:41:37 John Host We had a furnace like that in our basement when I was growing up, and it was this massive cast-iron nightmare machine.

00:41:45 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:41:46 John Host With—with tendrils going out.

[Jean gasps.]

To all of the different hot air registers throughout the house. It was very impressive, and very terrifying.

00:41:55 Jesse Host But it's definitely a question between my wife and I where we have very strongly different preferences, and it is the classic, uh, I am usually too warm and she is usually too cold. For me, I've always—I had always attributed it to being a native San Franciscan. Like, any temperature below 60 or above 70 seems uncomfortable to me! *[Laughs.]* So like, any time I'm not wearing a sweatshirt, I feel uncomfortable. And indeed, like, when I read Erin say that she wants to be cozy in the house, my immediate thought was that I am much more cozy in a sweater when it's 68.

00:42:34 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:42:35 John Host Yeah.

00:42:36 Jesse Host Than I am in a shirt when it's 73.

00:42:39 John Host Yeah. Erin, I—I mean, it costs a lot of money to heat a house in Michigan, I bet, during the winter. Because it's cold there. So you do want your home to be a refuge from the cold. Not just... a version of the cold.

00:42:53 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:42:54 John Host You do want—

[All three laugh.]

You definitely want to feel a real difference between the outside and the inside.

00:43:01 Jesse Host You're not just looking for reduced brutality.

00:43:04 John Host Right!

[Jean laughs, John stifles laughter.]

And I kinda feel like 65 is pretty low for a inside temperature.

00:43:09 Jean Guest Mm.

00:43:11 John Host But I also concur with you, Jean, and you, Jesse, that coziness—if that's what you're after, Erin, coziness is enhanced by woolens, and socks, and sweatshirts, and blankies, and throws. And usually, like, a point—like, a focused source of heat, like a roaring fire. Or one of Jean's many electric fireplace inserts.

00:43:38 Jean Guest Mm-hm!

00:43:40 John Host That, to me, is coziness. So for ambient temperature, I'm—I think I need to rule in favor of Erin, but not all the way up to 72. And not even all the way up to 70. I think the appropriate compromise here is 69.999.

[Jesse and Jean laugh.]

If you have that level of control—*[laughs]*—put it at 69.999. Because 999 upside down is 666, the number of the beast.

[Jean laughs.]

00:44:05 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:44:06 Jesse Host I looked on [EnergyStar.gov](https://www.energy.gov), the—the federal government's energy efficiency website, and they reco—

00:44:12 John Host Oh, we have a federal government?

00:44:14 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* I know.

00:44:15 Jean Guest No.

00:44:16 Jesse Host Well, hopefully we still do by the time this episode comes out. Uh, they recommended 68, but said 70 is also acceptable. Shooting for 68.

00:44:25 Jean Guest Hm.

00:44:27 Jesse Host Is what they recommend. And I think probably even more important than the difference between 68 and 70, for example—certainly 69.9999999 and 70—

[Jean chuckles.]

—is, you know, a—a smart thermostat. Not a computer thermostat, but a programmable thermostat—

00:44:45 John Host Yeah.

00:44:47 Jesse Host —is very inexpensive and easy to install, and you just make sure that you are heating your home less when you are asleep.

00:44:57 John Host Mm-hm.

00:44:58 Jesse Host Uh, and when you are away from the house, *[stifles laughter]* when leaving the house returns to our lives.

00:45:03 John Host Yeah. You know what? Put, uh, Santa Claus in charge of the thermostat! 'Cause he's—he knows when you're sleeping, and he knows when you're awake!

00:45:09 Jean Guest So terrifying.

00:45:10 Jesse Host Yeah. He's the original smart thermostat.

00:45:11 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* That's right. Yeah. Sixty-nine feels right to me. That's the best number. And by the way, Erin, when you're really, really cold... there in Michigan... think of late June. June 21, 22, depends. That's the summer solstice. The longest day of the year. Unless you're in the southern hemisphere! In which case... psych! It's the longest again!

00:45:35 Jesse Host Ha haaa!

00:45:36 John Host 'Cause the Earth is a globe!

[John and Jean laugh.]

Jesse, Jean, before we go to a break, can either of you guess... where the holiday known as Midwinter Holiday is celebrated in June?

00:45:48 Jean Guest It could be my hometown. 'Cause we are, uh, the reverse.

00:45:52 John Host Cape Town?

00:45:53 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:45:54 John Host Yep. You're in the southern hemisphere.

00:45:55 Jean Guest We are. We're the flips. We're the flipsies.

00:45:57 John Host Uh, close, but not cigar. ...Close, but not cigar. That's a saying I just made up. *[Laughs.]*

00:46:02 Jean Guest Okay. Well... *[Laughs.]* Same to you, then!

00:45:57 John Host Antarctica! *[Laughs.]* Every southern hemisphere winter solstice, all of the research stations in Antarctica stop what they're doing and celebrate Midwinter Holiday. And they have a feast based on whatever they have around, 'cause they cannot take any shipments during the winter.

00:46:25 Jean Guest Huh!

00:46:26 John Host And do you know—*[stifles laughter]*—and do you know what some of them do as a ritual? They watch *The Thing*. *[Laughs.]*

00:46:34 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* What?!

00:46:35 Jean Guest What??

00:46:36 John Host They watch the movie *John Carpenter's The Thing*. *[Stifles laughter.]* Which is about a research station that is snowed in, and then, uh—and then terrorized by an alien creature that wants to eat them. That's their holiday!

I'm telling you. Jesse, when we get—Jennifer Marmor, when we get to do live shows again, book Antarctica, please.

00:46:58 Jesse Host I know. I would love it.

00:46:59 John Host I wanna do a huge—

00:47:00 Jean Guest Are you booking Antarctica as a guest bailiff?

[Jesse laughs.]

00:47:02 John Host Yeah! We can all go—we can all go! Just do a huge Midwinter Holiday Pageant in Antarctica!

00:47:10 Jesse Host *[Laughing]* The frozen body of Shackleton or whatever is the guest bailiff.

[Jean laughs, Jesse recovers.]

You know, John, I have been in the very dawn days of podcasting. Maybe the proudest moment of my entire podcasting career, in maybe—I'm gonna say 2005, perhaps? Uh, there was a call that went out on the Yahoo group for podcasters.

00:47:34 John Host Mm-hm?

00:47:35 Jesse Host That said:

"I am sending data CDs of content to Antarctica via airplane for Antarctica's radio station. If you send me data files, and give me permission to air them on Antarctica's radio station, I will."

And, uh, I sent in MP3s of *The Sound*—then called *The Sound of Young America*, now my NPR show *Bullseye*.

00:47:59 John Host Right.

00:48:00 Jesse Host And it was the thrill of a lifetime to know that they were airing in, uh—in frozen Antarctica.

00:48:08 Jean Guest Hm!

00:48:09 John Host I'm wearing a Ross Island Trail System Antarctica T-shirt that was sent to me by listener Dave, from Antarctica! I still don't understand why listener Dave was in Antarctica.

00:48:20 Jesse Host He wasn't even a scientist, if I remember correctly!

[John laughs.]

He was working on painting things.

00:48:25 John Host I don't—I guess they need someone to paint things. And I don't—and I think that this was not sent from Antarctica. I think he brought it from Antarctica and then sent it to me. He also sent me a T-shirt that said, "Take only one banana, please." 'Cause apparently—*[laughs]*—apparently there's a big problem with banana-hoarding at the—in the cafeteria at this particular—whatever research station he was at.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:48:48 Jesse Host Apparently, uh, Jennifer Marmor, our producer's grandma went to Antarctica.

00:48:53 John Host Oh, she's nodding along!

00:48:54 Jean Guest Did she come back?

[Beat.]

00:48:56 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:48:57 Jean Guest Ohhh, that's a good—that's good. That's good. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:48:58 Jean Guest Confirmed.

00:48:59 John Host That's a Midwinter Holiday miracle.

00:49:01 Jesse Host Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll hear disputes about scratch-off lottery tickets, and an update from a past litigant about solar panels!

00:49:09 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

00:49:12 Jesse Promo Judge Hodgman, we're taking a quick break from clearing the docket with our buddy Jean. Let's talk about what we have upcoming. What's going on with you, John?

00:49:19 John Promo Well, uh, aside from going to your search engine and putting in the words "Jean" and "Grae"—J-E-A-N, G-R-A-E—to see all the things that Jean has made everywhere in the world, which is pretty much everything everywhere... I hope you will also put in, or considering putting in once again, the URL Bit.ly/dicktown. That's Bit dot L-Y slash D-I-C-K-T-O-W-N.

That of course brings you to the Hulu page hosting all ten episodes of the animated comedy co-created by me and our friend David Rees called *Dicktown*, in which I play a sad, uh, former boy detective who's now a grown-up man still solving mysteries for teenagers, and David plays my former arch nemesis and high school bully, who is now my only friend.

It's a show we put a lot of our heart into, and has a lot of heart in it, even though it is called *Dicktown*. And we really would love to make

more. And your going to that URL, watching it, spreading the word, is really helping us get to that goal. You'll also hear the incredible voice of Jean Grae! In episode one, as Monica. The cosplayer.

As well! Uh, if you are interested in any of my books, and getting any of them signed or personalized, before the holiday—the Midwinter Holiday—there is still time to do it. Just go to BooksAreMagic.net, or just Google "Books Are Magic," or give them a call. That's a great bookshop. That's Emma Straud's bookshop there in Brooklyn. And you can buy any copy of any of my books, ask me to sign it or personalize it to you or to a friend, and I will be dropping by there throughout December to sign those books and get 'em back to you in time for the holidays.

So that's what's going on with me. Jesse Thorn, what's going on with you?

00:51:09	Jesse	Promo	Well, I'm also plugging <i>Dicktown</i> , because my wife and I finished watching <i>Dicktown</i> . It's a wonderful, hilarious show.
00:51:13	John	Promo	Aw.
00:51:15	Jesse	Promo	It's very much more heartfelt than you might expect, very much more character-driven, David Rees is much better at <u>acting</u> than you would think he would be—
00:51:24	John	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> He's a natural!
00:51:25	Jesse	Promo	<i>[Laughs.]</i> It's so funny. And such a—the conceit seems glib, but it really comes to life on the screen. It is a very sweet, funny show that I love. So I hope everyone <u>will</u> actually make the effort to watch <i>Dicktown</i> .
			A lot of folks who listen to <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> told me they listened to my interview with David Letterman on my NPR show <i>Bullseye</i> .
00:51:49	John	Promo	Yeah.
00:51:50	Jesse	Promo	I'm very grateful to all of those folks. We have some other really great guests coming up on <i>Bullseye</i> , including David Cross—
00:51:55	John	Promo	Oh!
00:51:57	Jesse	Promo	—speaking of comedy hero Davids.
00:51:58	John	Promo	With beards?
00:51:59	Jesse	Promo	With beards, that's true. And David Cross really talked about his childhood and emotional life in a way that I personally had not heard him talk about, uh, in public, and it was very moving.
00:52:13	John	Promo	Yeah.
00:52:14	Jesse	Promo	And it was a great conversation. So watch out for that on <i>Bullseye</i> as well. And of course... John, I have a store, and it's the holiday season, and probably a holiday season where you don't wanna go to any physical stores.
00:52:28	John	Promo	Mm-hm!
00:52:29	Jesse	Promo	And you wanna get something that is really great and special for someone that you love, and you should do it from my store, the Put This On Shop, at PutThisOnShop.com . Every purchase helps me

keep, uh, my one employee Spencer employed.

[Both laugh.]

But also—also, there's—

00:52:45	John	Promo	While disseminating great and cool things out into the world!
00:52:48	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, there's <u>so</u> much cool stuff that you can buy in the Put This On Shop. Don't think it's just for super fancy fancy-lads. Although it <u>is</u> certainly <u>for</u> them. If they're—if you <u>have</u> a super fancy fancy-lad in your, uh, family, yes, of course, you should— <i>[stifles laughter]</i> —there's no question that you should be buying them gifts from the Put This On Shop. But they <u>needn't</u> be super fancy fancy-lads! People of all genders, shapes, sizes, and personalities can find something great in the Put This On Shop.
			I have Planters Mr. Peanut bowls. There's a full set of peanut bowls for your peanut entertaining, once the—once the pandemic is over, everybody's gonna be having peanut parties, and they're gonna need custom bowls for that.
00:53:29	John	Promo	<i>[Laughs quietly.]</i> I have some of these peanut bowls! That were sourced from another place, but I only had the—I only have the large one, and <u>one</u> of the small ones! This is a complete set! These are <u>hot</u> .
00:53:41	Jesse	Promo	Yeah, it's one group bowl for your primary storage of your peanuts at the party, and then each person has their own little bowl, and you can put a little peanut spoon in the big one. Spoon 'em out into your little one. If you—I mean, you'd have to get yourself a peanut spoon.
00:53:56	John	Promo	Uh, I'm sure that that will show up at the Put This On Shop eventually.
00:53:59	Jesse	Promo	Anyway, if you use the code "Holiday Justice" at PutThisOnShop.com , almost everything ships for free in the US. That's PutThisOnShop.com, and the code is "Holiday Justice."
00:54:12	John	Promo	Let's get back to the docket!
00:54:13	Sound Effect	Transition	<i>[Three gavel bangs.]</i>
00:54:15	Jesse	Host	Welcome back the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. We're clearing the docket. We're joined by our friend Jean Grae. Here is a dispute from Sara. She says: "My husband and I both <u>dislike</u> receiving scratch-off lottery tickets as gifts. We both feel that they are a waste of money, and they rarely result in winning anything other than more lottery tickets. However, several members of my family <u>enjoy</u> giving scratch-off lottery tickets as gifts. It's a, quote, 'tradition,' unquote, started with my grandfather Pop, who is no longer with us. My husband says we should ask my family to stop giving us lottery tickets, and to save their money. I feel that if my family members get enjoyment out of giving us lottery tickets, we should just let them continue."
00:55:01	John	Host	Well, Jesse, Jean, what do you think? Should Sara and her husband honor Pop? Or throw his legacy into the garbage like so many used

\$1 New York State Lottery "Snow Me the Money" cards?

[Jean and Jesse laugh.]

A real scratch-off card. *[Laughs.]*

00:55:17 Jesse Host I have immediate strong feelings about this, John.

00:55:19 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:55:20 John Host Please!

00:55:21 Jesse Host I'm not a gambler.

00:55:22 John Host No.

00:55:23 Jesse Host I went on an entire trip to Las Vegas where all I did was put—

00:55:25 John Host You don't know when to hold them, nor do you know when to fold them!

[Jesse and Jean laugh.]

00:55:29 Jesse Host No! I went on an entire trip to—

00:55:32 John Host You don't know when to walk away; usually you're walking closer, and people are like, "What are you even doing?! Are you a gambler?" and you're like, "No!"

00:55:36 Jean Guest Well, it's not his fault! It's because the song doesn't tell you when to, at all! It just presents the problem, and then there's no resolution. Or no suggestions.

00:55:44 John Host Right.

00:55:45 Jesse Host It's one of those, "If you've got it, you've got it" situations.

00:55:47 John Host That's right.

00:55:49 Jesse Host It's not intended to be instructional. It's about an essential quality of a human being.

00:55:52 Jean Guest I guess...

00:55:54 John Host Uh, Jesse, you and I are islands in the stream, and I—and I talked all over you there, and I apologize as your friend and partner. So please, go ahead.

00:56:00 Jesse Host I went on an entire trip to Las Vegas once where I just put one dollar into an *Antiques Roadshow* slot machine, 'cause I was so excited there was *Antiques Roadshow*-themed slot machines.

[John and Jesse laugh.]

00:56:10 John Host *[Laughing]* I am so happy! I had no idea! Oh my goodness!

[Jean laughs, John recovers.]

"Oh my days," as they say on, uh, *Love Island*.

00:56:20 Jesse Host It was a really fun trip to Las—Las Vegas is not my favorite place to visit, but, um—uh, I stayed at the Golden Nugget, and—which really does have a giant golden nugget, which I didn't know.

00:56:31 Jean Guest Mm-hm. *[Laughs.]*

00:56:32 John Host Uh-huh.

00:56:33 Jesse Host That's—it's—it has a titular golden nugget. And it—there was a women's bodybuilding competition going on in the hotel at the time. So it was just full of enormous muscled women, and their tiny, uh, male handlers. Which was just a great vibe.

00:56:50 John Host Wow.

[Jean laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

00:56:51 Jesse Host Just in general, it was just like, "This is cool. This is great. This is why you wanna go to Las Vegas."

Um, but yeah. I—I am not a gambler. But I have to say that, as a non-gambler... I think it is a waste of money to spend your money on scratch-off lottery tickets.

00:57:09 John Host Mm-hm.

00:57:11 Jesse Host But I think this family tradition is fun! And if I was in a family where it was a family tradition to give lottery tickets out as gifts, I would think it was very fun to get them as gifts!

00:57:22 John Host Yeah!

00:57:23 Jesse Host As long as no one was spending an amount of money on them that was... problematic. You know, I wouldn't want—I wouldn't want my mother-in-law Beth to buy me \$500 in lottery ticket, where—lottery tickets, where it would, you know, cramp her household budget.

00:57:37 John Host I would only want her to do that if it was offsetting her purchase of a seven-and-a-half-foot fiber-optic tree.

00:57:41 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:57:42 Jesse Host Yeah.

00:57:43 John Host But yes. Right.

00:57:44 Jesse Host But I mean, if it—if it was in the scale of, uh—of an appropriate gift—in my wife's family, they give each other \$20 gifts, usually.

00:57:51 John Host Right. Right.

00:57:52 Jesse Host And they do a Secret Santa-type situation. I would think that would be fun!

00:57:57 John Host A \$20 lottery ticket, that—that's quite a ticket!

00:58:01 Jesse Host Well, twenty \$1 lottery tickets or ten \$2 lottery tickets, and then, you know, the net proceeds—

00:58:07 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

00:58:08 Jesse Host —probably, depending on the state, go to... schools, or something!

00:58:12 John Host What do you think, Jean? You are a gambler! I know that, 'cause we went to Las Vegas together!

00:58:15 Jean Guest *[Laughs.]* You do!

00:58:17 John Host Stayed at the El Cortez Hotel, and I did not see an *Antiques Roadshow* slot machine there. *[Stifling laughter]* I'm very upset about it!

00:58:24 Jean Guest No, I didn't see one either. You were very successful, uh, at your slot machine.

00:58:32 John Host For a while.

00:58:33 Jean Guest For a while. And then, uh—
[John exhales thoughtfully.]
 And then, uh, for a while—and then it was not. And I was like, "Yeah, you should've gotten outta here." I was, uh, down there until three o'clock in the morning, and, uh, didn't go well for me.

00:58:44 John Host I'm sorry.

00:58:46 Jean Guest But I—I love slot machines. I love Vegas. I love, you know, the whole vibe of the place. However... I have a song on the—my—*That's Not How You Do That* adult instructional trilogy—*[laughs]*—called "You're Not Gonna Win the Lottery."

00:59:03 John Host Mm-hm.

00:59:04 Jean Guest About me being annoyed, especially in bodegas, when people are in front of me in line, having me in there all day because they're picking their goddamn numbers.

00:59:15 John Host Ah. Right.

00:59:17 Jean Guest And I'm like, "You know what? How about you just step to the side and let everybody else go, 'cause I wanna get outta here. You're not gonna win the lottery."
[Someone laughs quietly.]

00:59:24 John Host Yeah.

00:59:25 Jean Guest "It's not gonna happen. I know you wanna do this." That being said... I under—like, you—how you gonna be mad at Pop for wanting you— for also getting joy, like, outta buying his lottery tickets, and then being gracious enough to be like, *[slightly raspy]* "And you know what?"
[In her usual voice] 'Cause this is how Pop sounds.
[John laughs.]
[Raspy, strained] "I wanna give it to you! So that maybe you can win a million dollars!"
[Jean stops the Pop voice.]
 And then be like, *[mopey]* "Aw, I don't want that!"
[Jean stops the mopey tone.]
 That's rude. Take your lottery tickets. I want someone to give me lottery tickets! I'll take 'em!

01:00:00 John Host In the secular observance of Midwinter Holiday... there's a creature called the Grinch.

01:00:06 Jesse Host Mm-hm.

01:00:07 John Host Somebody who just can't get into it.

01:00:08 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

01:00:10 John Host Now, look. Gambling is a—can be a seriously destructive addiction.

And I certainly wouldn't want my... aunt (*sounds like "ant"*)—or aunt (*rhymes with "gaunt"*), as we say in New England—who's got a gambling problem, buying \$5,000 worth of scratch tickets to give to me! Even though that would greatly increase my chances of winning. That would be bad.

So I don't mean to diminish gambling, uh, its deleterious effects. But... yeah! I come from a family where I had a grandfather named Pop! We'd get some scratch-off tickets in our stockings! It's fun. It's like, there's so much—if you're stuffing a stocking, it's gonna be junk anyway. Might as well have something to do for five seconds.

[Jean or Jesse laughs quietly.]

Maybe you'll win 25 bucks.

01:00:55 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:00:57 Jesse Host You can't fill a whole stocking with satsumas.

[Jean laughs.]

01:01:00 John Host One thing I learned, looking into this, is that the Maryland lottery has an extremely elaborate webpage detailing all the different scratch-off games they have.

01:01:13 Jean Guest Hm!

01:01:14 John Host There's a scratch-off finder—*[laughs]*—

01:01:16 Jean Guest Oh, lord.

01:01:17 John Host Where you can filter them by, uh, payout, by what kinds of games there are—uh, there's even—you can—

01:01:23 Jesse Host Celebrity endorsers.

01:01:24 John Host Well—

01:01:25 Jesse Host Cal Ripken Jr.

01:01:26 John Host Yeah.

01:01:27 Jean Guest Oh, wow.

01:01:28 Jesse Host Uh, John Waters.

[All three laugh.]

01:01:32 John Host A John Waters scratch-off ticket would be—would be amazing, yep!

01:01:33 Jesse Host Omar from *The Wire*. The character, Omar. *[Laughs.]*

01:01:37 John Host Yeah.

01:01:38 Jean Guest *[Stifling laughter]* Just the character Omar from *The Wire* scratch-off?

01:01:39 Jesse Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah.

01:01:40 John Host Yeah. Come at—yeah, you come at the king, you best not miss!

[Jesse laughs.]

Uh, you can even get a sortable, exportable spreadsheet. *[Stifles laughter.]* That you can download. It's an incredibly elaborate website. So...

01:01:51 Jean Guest Huh.

01:01:53 Jean Guest Yeah. Jean, I'm gonna send you, uh—you and Quelle each a Peppermint Payout, times three.

01:01:58 Jean Guest I don't want that. I don't want that. I want—

01:02:00 John Host No?

01:02:01 Jean Guest We're not talking about Pop sending us lottery tickets. This is John Hodgman sending us something. And we want slot machines. So you're gonna send us each a slot machine, or you send us NOTHING!

[Jesse laughs quietly.]

01:02:09 John Host I'll tell you what I want. I'll tell you what I want. I wanna get back into the seat... of that huge *Game of Thrones*—

01:02:17 Jean Guest *[Laughing]* That was amazing!

01:02:19 John Host —slot machine that I played in the El Cortez.

01:02:22 Jean Guest It was like, 12 feet tall. *[Laughs.]*

01:02:24 John Host And it surrounded you! Like, I had—

01:02:26 Jean Guest And you like, got—you had to get into it.

01:02:29 John Host Yeah! I was—

01:02:30 Jean Guest Like, you didn't just sit down. You got into the slot machine. Pretty much.

01:02:33 John Host Right! And I—it was like surround sound! It was incredible!

01:02:36 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

01:02:37 Jesse Host Like you're playing *Need for Speed* at the arcade, or whatever?

01:02:39 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, exactly!

01:02:40 Jean Guest But—but bigger. Just, more.

01:02:42 John Host It was just—and it—and I was doing so well on it.

01:02:45 Jean Guest It was so loud!

01:02:47 John Host For a long time. And—

01:02:48 Jesse Host Did you sit on an iron throne?

01:02:49 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* I sat on an iron throne, and it—you know what? I got some scratches. 'Cause that's—you're supposed to be reminded as the ruler that...

[Jean laughs quietly.]

01:02:55 Jesse Host Right.

01:02:57 John Host But the—you know, it had all these voices in it, including this Peter Dinklage soundalike who would say things like, "Well done!" or whatever.

01:03:03 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

01:03:05 John Host And after a while of this, I realized, "Oh. From an 826 Valencia event I did a million years ago, I have Peter Dinklage's email." So at two o'clock in the morning in Las Vegas, I emailed Peter Dinklage—

01:03:16 Jean Guest Oh no.

01:03:17 John Host —to say, "Did—did you record your own voice for this *Game of Thrones* slot machine that I'm in?"

[Jean and John laugh quietly.]

Five minutes later, "Yes." That was the whole email back.

[All three laugh.]

01:03:30 Jesse Host "Yesss!"

01:03:31 Jean Guest Somebody recognized—

01:03:34 Jesse Host The Dink is a straight shooter, John.

01:03:35 John Host Yep, he told me the truth. Told me the truth.

01:03:37 Jesse Host Okay, so we finally have some follow-up here from Kari in Minnesota.

01:03:42 John Host Here we go.

01:03:44 Jesse Host Who you may remember from episode 443, "Daylight Savings Crime." I wasn't the bailiff on this episode, John! What happened?

01:03:49 John Host That's right! Ify Nwadiwe was our guest bailiff that week. A member—

01:03:54 Jesse Host The host of Maximum Fun's own film show *Who Shot Ya?*!

01:03:58 John Host Exactly! And member of the Legion of Guest Bailiffs. Long live the Legion. And so for your benefit—and yours as well, Jean—Kari brought the case against her husband Joshua about the home solar panels that he had installed. And she was feeling that his obsession with energy efficiency was getting out of hand.

Uh, and—and so what does Kari have to say?

01:04:20 Jesse Host "Joshua's excited to report that we went net zero on electricity for the year! In fact, we produced 69 more kilowatt hours than we consumed. It was a—"

01:04:31 John Host Wait, how many?

01:04:32 Jesse Host Sixty-nine.

[Jean laughs quietly.]

01:04:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Sorry, I wanna write that—I'm sorry.

Jesse: Point nine, nine, nine.

[Jean and John laugh.]

01:04:36 John Host Thank you.

01:04:37 Jesse Host "It was a squeaker, but we did it. Joshua is complying well with your ruling by majorly toning down the frequency of his stats reports and back-of-the-envelope jottings. It's been a win-win. Thanks for your help."

01:04:50 John Host And they sent in a photo, which if you scroll down, Jean, you can see.

01:04:54 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

01:04:55 John Host Josh snow-squeegeeing his solar panels on his shed.

01:05:00 Jean Guest That's what's up.

01:05:01 John Host In Minnesota. Hoo, boy oh boy. You know, look. I spend part of the time—and even part of the winter—in Maine. But... I'm telling you, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, they get the real winter. That's the real stuff there.

01:05:13 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

01:05:14 John Host Tell you. I think—I think if you've gone net zero, and you've put out 69.999 whatever's, you've earned yourself a fiber-optic Christmas tree, you guys. Happy Midwinter Holiday.

01:05:26 Jean Guest That's impressive.

01:05:29 John Host It's cold. That looks cold as—

01:05:30 Jean Guest It's very cold! It looks cold. It—

01:05:32 John Host That was taken recently

01:05:35 Jean Guest You know how you just—you look at something, you're like, "Yeah, but it's snow," you're like, "Eh," but I just feel it. I can feel it.

01:05:38 John Host I know! Like, the—the—yeah, that's—*[sighs]*. There's snow all over the ground, there's snow all over the roofs, there's snow all over the trees and the tops of the gates. And we record this in advance! This was recorded in August!

[Jean and/or Jesse laugh quietly.]

So... Minnesota is not—I love Minnesota. Never seen a more bleaker landscape than in Minnesota in the middle of February as I drove from Minneapolis St. Paul Airport to Morris, Minnesota, to do a show up there at the University of Minnesota at Morris. Which is up on the way to Fargo. And I would just drive through what literally seemed to be abandoned towns. Like, nothing was open. No one was on the streets, no cars in the streets. And I'm like, "Where is everybody?" And then I would crest a hill, and then I would see, down off to my left, one of these lakes they have. They have about 10,000 of 'em.

01:06:31 Jesse Host Mm-hm. Roughly.

01:06:32 Jean Guest Mm-hm.

01:06:33 John Host And I realized—I realized where the town was! It was on the lake! Everyone had moved onto the frozen lake. There was truck after truck after truck, after fishing camp after fishing camp after fishing camp on this lake.

01:06:43 Jean Guest Wow.

01:06:45 John Host Hardy—hardy people. Hardy people up there in Northern Minnesota.

01:06:48 Jesse Host John, I'll never forget when I—when my radio show was with Public Radio International, which was based in Minneapolis St. Paul.

01:06:54 John Host Yeah.

01:06:55 Jesse Host Having a phone conversation with my person there. We had a weekly meeting. Her name was Heidi. Very kind woman. And... I'll never forget the feeling I had when Heidi said to me that she was hiring a man later that day to clear the snow from her roof, and I said, "Oh. It doesn't just fall off or whatever?"

[Stifling laughter] And she says, "No. If a man doesn't come to clear it, my house would collapse."

[Jean sighs. Jesse cracks up.]

01:07:28 John Host Ohhh, my lord. Oh my days. Oh my days.
01:07:31 Jean Guest That's, uh, too much snow! I like a little bit of snow. I like, uh, a snowpocalypse here and there. 'Cause it gives—it was originally the excuse to be like, "Aw, man. I'm sorry, that got canceled! Can't do it!"
01:07:49 John Host Right. You don't—you don't need a snowpocalypse anymore.
01:07:50 Jean Guest And at this point, I just wanna see—no! We don't need it.
01:07:52 John Host Right.
01:07:53 Jean Guest But I do wanna see the environment, like, do something else. Like—

[John and Jesse burst out laughing, Jean stifles laughter.]

Like, just do something else, and then it would give me a reason to be like, "Oh, I can't go do anything," like, for a different reason.

01:08:07 John Host Yeah.
01:08:08 Jean Guest That would be great.
01:08:11 Jesse Host The docket's clear. That's it for another episode of *Judge John Hodgman*. Our thanks to our friend Jean Grae for joining us this week. You can find her on Twitter at [@JeanGreasy](#), and on Bandcamp at [JeanGrae.Bandcamp.com](#). J-E-A-N-G-R-A-E dot Bandcamp dot com. Jean has some holiday EPs up on Bandcamp right now, including one called—

[Jean laughs, Jesse stifles laughter.]

—with her husband Quelle Chris, called, *MERRYPOCALYPSE*.

[John laughs.]

01:08:41 Jean Guest How fitting.
01:08:43 Jesse Host That's fun! Um, but gosh, that's just—
01:08:44 John Host And there's all kinds of other stuff that she's created up there! Including the, uh—the adulting trilogy, right? Your—*That's Not How You Do That*.
01:08:51 Jean Guest Yeah! Check out all the *That's Not How You Do Thats*, which does include the song "You're Not Gonna Win the Lottery."
01:08:58 Jesse Host Our producer is the ever capable Jennifer Marmor. You can follow us on Twitter at [@JesseThorn](#) and [@hodgman](#). We're on Instagram at [@judgejohnhodgman](#). Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* Tweets [#JJHo](#), and check out the Maximum Fun subreddit to [discuss this episode](#). Submit your cases at [MaximumFun.org/jjho](#), or email hodgman@maximumfun.org.

We'll see you next time on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

01:09:24 Sound Effect Transition *[Three gavel bangs.]*

01:09:26 Music Transition A cheerful ukulele chord.

01:09:27	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:09:29	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:09:30	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:09:31	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.